

IMPAIRED DRIVING PROGRAM



Alberta
SOLICITOR GENERAL

BRIEFING
PAPER

BRIEFING
PAPER

BRIEFING
PAPER

BRIEFING
PAPER

BRIEFING
PAPER

BRIEFING
PAPER

BRIEFING
PAPER

BRIEFING
PAPER

BRIEFING
PAPER

- Designated Driver Program
- Safe Ride Home Programs

DESIGNATED DRIVER PROGRAM

INDEX

A. Introduction	1
B. Program Description	1
C. Jurisdictional Use of Designated Driver Programs	1
1. Alberta	
a) Alberta Restaurant and Foodservices Association	
b) Old Strathcona Designated Driver Program	
c) Community Associations/Private Parties	
2. Other Canadian Jurisdictions	
3. The United States	
D. Proposed Province Wide Designated Driver Program for Alberta	5
1. The Concept	
2. The Program	
a) Private House Parties	
b) Licensed Establishments	
c) Social Functions	
E. Conclusion	7

APPENDIX A: Guidelines for Licensed Establishments

APPENDIX B: Guidelines for Social Functions

A. INTRODUCTION

This briefing paper will detail the designated driver concept and outline the programs that are operational in Alberta, Canada and in the United States. Additionally, it will provide an overview of the province-wide program currently being established in Alberta.

B. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A review of the available literature indicates that the designated driver program usually operates in licensed restaurants and lounges. One person in a party of two or more is identified as the designated driver and receives non-alcoholic beverages at no cost, for the duration of the group's stay at the establishment. In the event the designated driver requests an alcoholic beverage, all previously received non-alcoholic beverages are charged to the "tab".

The licensed establishment may use posters, tent-cards, media advertising or server advice to announce its participation in a designated driver program. Additionally, pins or badges can be used to identify the designated driver in each group.

C. JURISDICTIONAL USE OF DESIGNATED DRIVER PROGRAMS

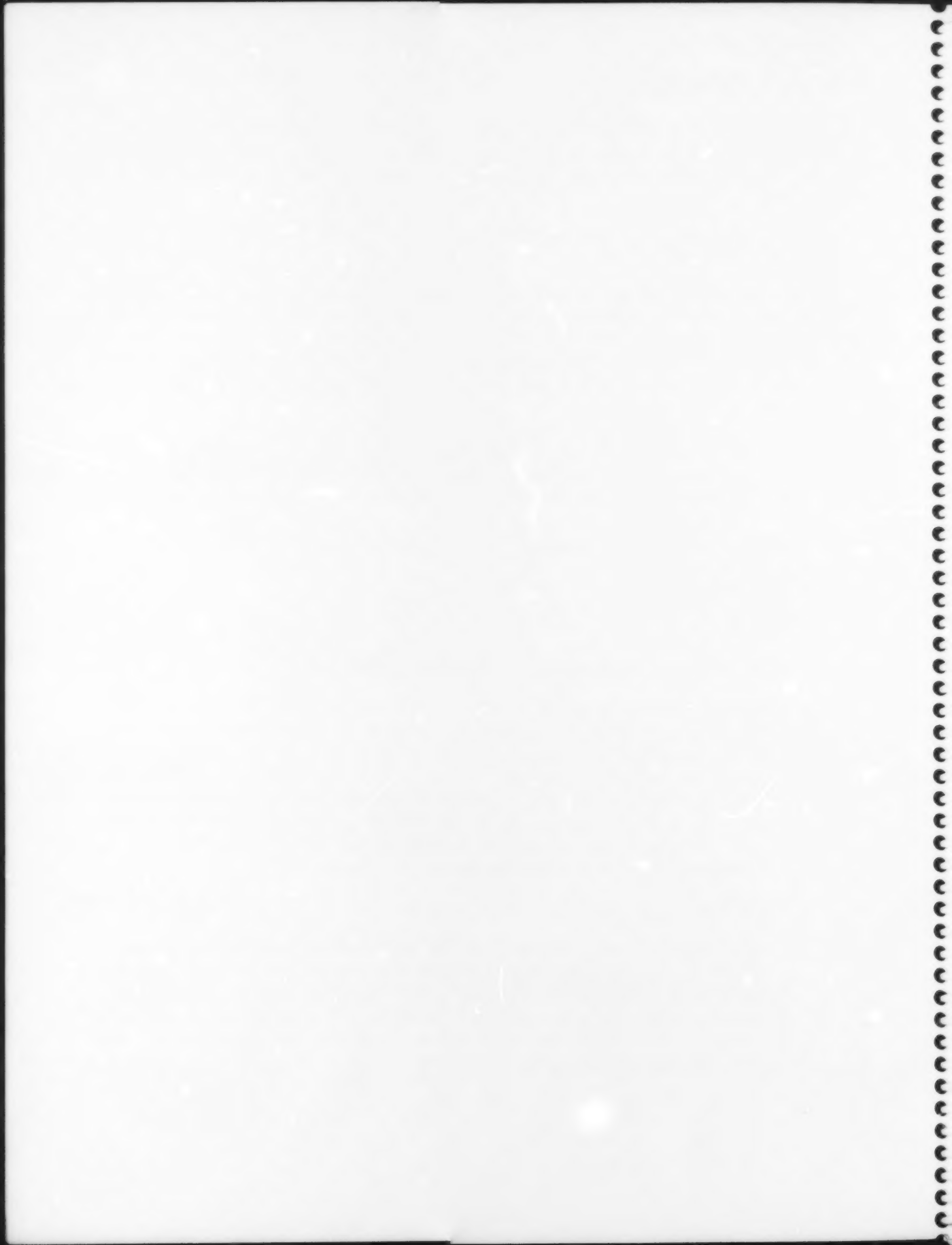
1. Alberta

a) Alberta Restaurant and Foodservices Association

The Alberta Restaurant and Foodservices Association (ARFA) indicates that there are 5,700 licensed establishments in Alberta. Approximately three years ago, a designated driver information kit was prepared by ARFA and distributed to its membership. These promotional kits received wide distribution but were not seen as effective in assisting restaurant and lounge proprietors in implementing designated driver programs, because all set up and maintenance costs for the program were the responsibility of the individual owner of the establishment. No financial assistance was provided to the members of ARFA.

b) Old Strathcona Designated Driver Program

In an attempt to reduce the number of impaired drivers on Edmonton streets, constables with the Edmonton City Police approached several associations and premises in Old Strathcona in October, 1987, to pilot a designated driver project. Nineteen establishments agreed to participate in this program and groups such as the Old Strathcona Foundation and the Old Strathcona Village Market provided their endorsement to this endeavor.



The Old Strathcona Designated Driver Program was initiated in October, 1987. Hook Outdoor Advertising provided a full size outdoor sign in Old Strathcona for 28 days during the Christmas season, free of charge, with the exception of the \$560 artwork fee. Additionally, the Edmonton City Police contracted with a supplier of decals and badges so that these items (e.g. two decals and one hundred buttons) could be supplied for less than \$60 through the Crime Prevention Section.

Following the Old Strathcona pilot project, the Edmonton City Police issued letters to all restaurants and lounges in Edmonton, inviting them to participate in this program. Only one-third of the Edmonton establishments returned correspondence to the Edmonton City Police expressing interest in the designated driver program. The respondents, however, have yet to operationalize the program in their establishment.

No formal evaluation of the Old Strathcona project has been undertaken to date. The most significant testimonial about the success of this program, however, has been the direction in January, 1988, of the Executive Committee of the Edmonton Police Department to expend human and financial resources to encourage other licensed establishments, across the city, to participate in a designated driver program.

c) Community Associations/Private Parties

The Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues formed a committee in November, 1987, to look at the possibility of establishing a designated driver program as part of the rental contract for community halls. This committee has, to date, not formalized this plan, nor is there any other organization currently initiating such a program for private hall and/or house parties.

2. Other Canadian Jurisdictions

With the exception of New Brunswick, there are no formalized designated driver programs operational in other Canadian jurisdictions. Both British Columbia and Ontario indicate that a number of restaurants and lounges have designated driver programs but do so through their own individual initiative rather than a provincial effort. There is no promotional material available from the British Columbia and Ontario provincial governments on the designated driver program.

3. Private Corporations in Canada

The designated driver program in New Brunswick is a Public Service Safety Program funded through the Federal Department of Justice. It has received the endorsement of the Federal/Provincial DWI Strategies Interdepartmental Committee, including representation from the Alcoholism and Drug Dependency Commission, the Departments of Justice, Transportation and Education and the New Brunswick Medical Society.

The goals and objectives of the New Brunswick Designated Driver Program are to enhance the federal legislation on impaired driving, to create public awareness, and to educate the general public to the necessity of eliminating drinking and driving. Target groups to solicit support for this program include the general public, proprietors of restaurants, bars and other licensed establishments in New Brunswick. Program materials developed for wide distribution include a descriptive and explanatory pamphlet in French/English; a bilingual button; a 11" x 17" bilingual poster and public service announcements in the media utilizing the message "JOIN TED'S TEAM - Eliminate Drinking and Driving - Be A Designated Driver".

The Hiram Walker corporation, in the past, has provided the Canadian Club Designated Driver Program. The material was a prepackaged, ready to use program available to all restaurants and lounges across the country. This has been terminated but no information is currently available for its failure. When available, the Canadian Club Designated Driver kit could be purchased for \$29.95 plus provincial sales tax. The package included the following promotional material:

- a) 1 - window decal;
- b) 1 - 17" x 22" poster;
- c) 200 - designated driver identification badges;
- d) 300 - customer brochures and a brochure stand;
- e) 10 - server instruction cards;
- f) 1 guideline - benefit booklet; and
- g) 1 - black and white advertising reproduction sheet.

4. The United States

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) of the United States Department of Transportation recently completed a nation-wide research study in order to obtain more comprehensive information about designated driver programs. The goals of their project included:

- a) Identifying formal designated driver programs throughout the United States and obtaining information from a sample of these programs in order to describe their major features and operation.
- b) Identifying some informal designated driver activities and obtaining more limited information from a sample of these in order to describe their operation. Informal designated driver activities were defined as those in which individuals participate, on their own, without the encouragement of advertising or incentives offered by a drinking establishment.

The following represents a brief summation of the conclusions of the NHTSA study:

- a) Although there were many varieties of designated driver programs, they all operated according to similar general principles:
 - i) the designated driver was expected to remain sober while others in his/her party drank; and
 - ii) the ride home was expected to be in a vehicle owned by one of the party.
- b) Over half of the designated driver programs studied had an eligibility criteria which consisted of a minimum number of members participating in the program, usually two to six people.
- c) The incentives for the designated driver consisted of free non-alcoholic beverages.
- d) The most common type of designated driver identification was a button, carrying messages such as "No Thanks, I'm Driving" or "I Have The Key to Safe Driving".
- e) Establishments tended to advertise their program through the use of posters and table tent cards.
- f) Most programs were in operation whenever the drinking establishment was open and most proprietors operating a designated driver program had other types of programs for controlling alcohol use, such as providing rides home to intoxicated patrons.
- g) Costs for the designated driver programs varied, but were generally regarded as low by the establishments, given the fact that the costs were often offset by free publicity generated about the program.
- h) Despite their potential for impacting the impaired driving problem, the established programs produced relatively few designated drivers. Additionally, it was not known whether designated drivers actually did the driving.
- i) Two action plans were suggested for increasing participation in designated driver programs - increase incentives and actively solicit participation in the designated driver program. For example, Margaritaville in California offers designated drivers a free meal selected from any item on the menu. Not surprisingly, Margaritaville reported an unusually high number of designated drivers. Additionally, Juke Box Saturday Night in Minnesota actively solicits participation in their program by having the doorman/cashier ask large groups if they are interested in same.
- j) Personal contact by the staff is essential upon entering and leaving the establishment, as it ensures the designated driver's sobriety as well as guarantees he/she will do the driving.
- k) Efforts should be made to reduce any stigma associated with becoming a designated driver. This can occur through staff wearing designated driver pins which not only promote the program but also brings respectability to the concept.
- l) Staff training for this program was typically part of the general orientation and alcohol awareness presentation given to each new employee or part of their periodic staff meetings.

- m) the preplanning process, including making decisions such as who will be drinking and who will remain sober, and what cars will be utilized, should be advertised in all promotional material in order to make the designated driver program effective.

If this does not occur, two concerns arise:

- i) groups of individuals may tend to drive in several cars, thereby requiring many drivers; and
- ii) if members of a group drive to a central location and then travel together to a drinking establishment, they still face the issue of driving home while intoxicated from their meeting place.

D. PROPOSED PROVINCE WIDE DESIGNATED DRIVER PROGRAM FOR ALBERTA

1. The Concept

- a) The Designated Driver Program puts the onus on the group to identify a person who will:
 - i) not drink any alcoholic beverages prior to and during the outing; and,
 - ii) take responsibility for ensuring that the other members of the group arrive home safely.
- b) One individual in a group (three or more at licensed establishments and two or more at social functions) is identified as the designated driver, prior to any alcohol consumption.
- c) Once identified, the designated driver is offered non-alcoholic beverages (excluding mocktails) at no cost for the duration of the group's stay at the function.
- d) Should there be a large number in the group, it may be necessary and appropriate to have more than one designated driver.
- e) Each designated driver wears a badge which clearly identifies him/her as the designated driver to members of his/her group, hosts and servers.

2. The Program

Unlike other existing programs, Alberta's multi-faceted Designated Driver Program targets the following:

a) Private House Parties

- i) In a coordinated effort with the Alberta Liquor Control Board (ALCB), community interest groups, the police, private sector agencies, corporations and other government agencies, the Department of the Solicitor General has developed print material that is distributed through each ALCB outlet across the province.

- ii) This material, available at no cost, entitled "The Perfect Mix For Private Parties" outlines the responsibilities of a "Party Host" and a "Party Guest".
- iii) This promotional material gives party hosts concrete steps to take in order to ensure their event does not contribute to a motor vehicle accident. Some of the example tips provided in the material include serving alternative non-alcoholic beverages, using a key drop and knowing the signs of impairment.
- iv) This promotional material also assists party goers in preplanning their transportation to and from the party. It provides concrete steps that can be taken to avoid becoming intoxicated, driving impaired or being a passenger in a vehicle driven by an impaired driver.

b) Licensed Establishments

- i) One individual in a group of three or more will be identified as the designated driver, prior to any alcohol consumption.
- ii) Once identified, the designated driver will be offered non-alcoholic beverages (excluding mocktails) at no cost, for the duration of the group's stay at the establishment.
- iii) In the event the designated driver consumes an alcoholic beverage or is found to be drinking an alcoholic beverage, all previously received free non-alcoholic beverages will be charged to the group's "tab".
- iv) Licensed establishments involved in the Designated Driver Program will display the promotional material in order to invite participation in the program.
- v) Refer to Appendix A for Guidelines For Licensed Establishments.

c) Social Functions

- i) The Designated Driver Program can be used effectively at community hall and service club functions, campus, college and university events, and in the corporate sector during company events and parties.
- ii) The Designated Driver Program can be used effectively where groups of people gather and alcohol is involved.
- iii) Facility operators will ensure that they promote the program internally with staff and advise all function organizers of the availability of a Designated Driver Program.
- iv) Distribution of initial promotional material will be made through the ALCB outlets in the province, at the point of permit requests.
- v) Promotional material will also be available through the Federation of Community Leagues (Calgary and Edmonton), service clubs and campus/university/college groups.
- vi) Refer to Appendix B for Guidelines for Social Functions.

3. Promotional Material

Promotional material available for licensed establishments and social functions will include:

- a) the designated driver "code" pocket calendar;
- b) "stick on" disposable badges for designated drivers;
- c) buttons for servers/hosts;
- d) lapel pins;
- e) posters;
- f) tent cards; and
- g) camera ready artwork of the designated driver logo which can be used to creatively promote the program.

The promotional material listed above will be provided in attractive kits to those licensed establishments/social functions that participate in the Designated Driver Program.

E. CONCLUSION

A number of government agencies, corporations, community interest groups, private sector agencies, and police forces have been involved in the development of Alberta's Designated Driver Program, because it ensures that with some pre-planning a potential tragedy can be avoided. Everyone supports the idea of people having a great time during their social outings, and the Designated Driver Program provides responsible individuals with a means to do so.

A successful Designated Driver Program will ultimately:

- 1. reduce the incidence of impaired driving;
- 2. reduce the incidence of motor vehicle accidents, resulting injuries, property damage; and
- 3. save lives.

Appendix A

DESIGNATED DRIVER PROGRAM

GUIDELINES FOR LICENSED ESTABLISHMENTS

WHAT IS THE DESIGNATED DRIVER PROGRAM?

A program which puts the onus on the group to identify a person who will:

- not drink any alcoholic beverage prior to and during the outing; and,
- take responsibility for ensuring that the other members of the group arrive home safely.

It is a program which, when successfully implemented, will:

- reduce the incidence of impaired driving;
- reduce the incidence of motor vehicle accidents, resulting injuries, property damage; and
- save lives.

HOW DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?

- One individual in a group of three or more will be identified as the designated driver, prior to any alcohol consumption.
- Once identified, the designated driver will be offered non-alcoholic beverages (excluding mocktails) at no cost for the duration of the group's stay at the establishment.
- In the event the designated driver consumes an alcoholic beverage, all previously received free non-alcoholic beverages will be charged to the group's "tab".
- Should there be a large number in the group it may be necessary and appropriate to have more than one designated driver. The server or manager should make this determination when serving large groups.

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DESIGNATED DRIVER?

- The designated driver will agree not to consume any alcoholic beverage prior to, during and after the group's stay at the establishment.
- The designated driver will ensure the safe transportation home of all individuals in the group.
- Each designated driver, in a participating establishment, will wear a badge which clearly identifies him/her both to members of his/her group and to servers in the establishment.

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SERVER?

- The server will advise all groups of three or more, of the availability of the Designated Driver Program prior to serving any alcoholic beverages.
- The server will assess the designated driver to determine the individual's abstinence and may deny participation in the program, based on this assessment.

- The server will wear a badge or related material to promote the Designated Driver Program and reduce any stigma associated with being a designated driver.

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ESTABLISHMENT?

- The establishment will provide non-alcoholic drinks of its choice at no cost to the designated driver.
- The establishment's management group will promote the Designated Driver Program with their staff and provide any support required for the program.
- The establishment will ensure the high visibility of the program.

WHAT PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL IS AVAILABLE?

The designated driver kit will include the following items:

- designated driver "code", pocket calendar;
- "stick on" disposable badges for designated drivers;
- buttons for servers;
- window stickers;
- tent cards; and
- camera ready art of the designated driver logo which can be affixed to stationery or used to creatively promote the Designated Driver Program.

Other items will include:

- Designated driver posters (available in two sizes); and
- Designated driver lapel pins.

Supplies of promotional material may be replenished upon request through the Alberta Restaurant and Foodservices Association, the Alberta Hotel Association or the Department of the Solicitor General.

The promotional material will be provided at no cost to the establishment.

HOW CAN WE PROMOTE THE DESIGNATED DRIVER PROGRAM?

- Promote the use of the Designated Driver Program through the use and display of available promotional material.
- Use the camera ready artwork of the designated driver logo on food menus, non-alcoholic drink menus, letterhead, promotional invitations, business cards, posters, and the like.
- Advertise or promote special non-alcoholic drinks (weekly/monthly or on menus) NOTE: The designated driver would be expected to pay for these more exotic beverages.

- Have bartenders create non-alcoholic drink recipes and determine the best recipe of the week (month). These could be published in trade papers or newspapers along with the name of the creator and the establishment.
- Provide poster giveaways.
- Conduct a non-alcoholic drink night or "mocktail" party. Invite media personnel to this special event.
- Provide incentive awards for servers who persuade patrons to participate in the Designated Driver Program.
- Conduct contests which reward both patrons and servers, so as to ensure the longevity of the program. These may take the form of in-house, local or provincial contests.
- Use your good judgement and be as creative as you like in your promotional campaigns of the Designated Driver Program.
- Use the "Party Animal" theme in as many varied ways as you can, in order to ensure the high visibility and accompanying acceptability of the Designated Driver Program.

WHO CAN I CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION AND/OR SUPPLIES?

Information about the provincial Designated Driver Program can be obtained from any one of the following groups:

- Alberta Restaurant and Foodservices Association
#712 Highfield Place
10010 - 106 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 3L8
(403) 426-6263
- or
- Alberta Restaurant and Foodservices Association
#205, 1725-10th Avenue, S.W.
Calgary, Alberta
T3C 0K1
(403) 245-0677
- Alberta Hotel Association
Center 104
5241 Calgary Trail South
Edmonton, Alberta
T6H 5N8
(403) 436-6112
- or
- Alberta Hotel Association
102A, 9705 Horton Road S.W.
Calgary, Alberta
T2V 2X5
(403) 253-3755
- Department of the Solicitor General
10th Floor, John E. Brownlee Building
10365 - 97 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 3W7
(403) 427 - 7245

Appendix B
DESIGNATED DRIVER PROGRAM
GUIDELINES FOR SOCIAL FUNCTIONS

WHAT IS THE DESIGNATED DRIVER PROGRAM?

A program which puts the onus on the group to identify a person who will:

- not drink any alcoholic beverage prior to or during the outing; and,
- take responsibility for ensuring that the other members of the group arrive home safely.

It is a program which, when successfully implemented, will:

- reduce the incidence of impaired driving;
- reduce the incidence of motor vehicle accidents, resulting injuries, property damage; and
- save lives.

HOW DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?

- One individual in a group of three or more will be identified as the designated driver, prior to any alcohol consumption.
- Once identified, the designated driver will be offered non-alcoholic beverages (excluding mocktails) at no cost for the duration of the group's stay at the function.
- Should there be a large number in the group, it may be necessary and appropriate to have more than one designated driver. If possible, the server or host should make this determination when serving large groups.

WHAT TYPES OF SOCIAL FUNCTIONS CAN EFFECTIVELY USE THE DESIGNATED DRIVER PROGRAM?

The Designated Driver Program can be effective at:

- community hall and service club functions where alcohol is being served;
- at campus, university and college functions;
- company events/parties in the corporate or public sector; and
- any event where groups of people gather and alcohol is being served.

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DESIGNATED DRIVER?

- The designated driver will agree not to consume any alcoholic beverage prior to, during and after the group's stay at the function.
- The designated driver will ensure the safe transportation home of all individuals in the group.
- Each designated driver, in a participating community hall or service club, will wear a badge which clearly identifies them both to members of their group and to servers.

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HOST?

- The host will, where possible, advise all groups of two or more, of the availability of the Designated Driver Program, prior to serving alcoholic beverages.
- The host will wear a badge to promote the Designated Driver Program and reduce any stigma associated with being a designated driver.
- The host will provide non-alcoholic drinks of his/her choice to the designated driver.

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FACILITY OPERATOR?

- The facility operator will promote the use of the Designated Driver Program through the use and display of available promotional material.
- The facility operator will promote the Designated Driver Program to all users of the facility.
- The facility operator will ensure that they promote the program internally with staff.

WHAT PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL IS AVAILABLE?

The designated driver kit includes the following items:

- designated driver "code" pocket calendars;
- "stick on" disposable badges for designated drivers; and
- buttons for hosts and servers.

Other items include:

- Window stickers;
- Tent cards;
- Designated driver posters (available in two sizes); and
- Designated driver lapel pins.

Supplies of the promotional material may be replenished upon request through the Federation of Community Leagues (Calgary and Edmonton), the Alberta Liquor Control Board, campus/university/college student's unions or the Department of the Solicitor General.

The promotional material will be provided at no cost to the facility operator and the host of the event.

HOW WILL PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL INITIALLY BE DISTRIBUTED?

- Distribution of initial promotional material will be made through the Alberta Liquor Control Board outlets in the province, at the point of permit requests.
- Promotional material will also be available through the Federation of Community Leagues (Calgary and Edmonton), campus, university and college groups.

HOW CAN WE PROMOTE THE DESIGNATED DRIVER PROGRAM?

- Both facility operators and social function hosts can promote the program by ensuring that promotional material is used and highly visible.
- Provide poster giveaways.
- Have incentives for groups who use the Designated Driver Program.
- Be creative.

WHO CAN I CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION AND/OR SUPPLIES?

Information about the provincial Designated Driver Program can be obtained from any of the following groups:

- The Alberta Liquor Control Board;
- The Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues;
- The Calgary Federation of Community Leagues;
- Campus/University/College Student's Unions; and
- The Department of the Solicitor General.

For more detailed information about the Designated Driver Program contact:

Department of the Solicitor General
10th Floor, John E. Brownlee Building
10365 - 97 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 3W7

Telephone: (403) 427 - 7245

SAFE RIDE HOME PROGRAMS

INDEX

A.	Program Objective	1
B.	Program Descriptions	1
	1. Subsidized Taxi Rides	
	2. Private Vehicle Escort - Annual Fee	
	3. Private Vehicle Escort - Special Events - No Annual Fee	
C.	Program Experiences	2
	1. Subsidized Taxi Rides	
	2. Private Vehicle Escort - Annual Fee	
	3. Private Vehicle Escort - Special Events - No Annual Fee	
D.	Stakeholders	4
E.	Financial Cost of Initiative	5
	1. Subsidized Taxi Rides	
	2. Private Vehicle Escort - Annual Fee	
	3. Private Vehicle Escort - Special Events - No Annual Fee	
F.	Overall Assessment	6
G.	Recommendations	7

A. PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

The objective of the programs described in this briefing paper is to provide safe rides home for persons who may be faced with a possible impaired driving situation either at private house parties or in public drinking establishments. Some programs also offer safe rides for persons who may be overly tired or have a medical problem.

Certain programs are offered year round, whereas others operate only during festive occasions. User costs range from free, to a subsidized taxi fare, to a yearly set fee plus call out charges.

The underlying concept basic to all programs is to remove drivers who are impaired from the road and take them home, with or without their vehicles, thereby diminishing collision potential.

B. PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

The programs under consideration are grouped under the following categories:

1. Subsidized Taxi Rides

This type of program would be jointly supported and sponsored by local taxi company(ies), public drinking establishments and brewers/distillers. If such a program accommodated private house parties, then the host/hostess would be expected to contribute towards the cost.

The program would operate as follows:

- a) The bartender (or host) would determine whether a customer (guest) was in a potentially impaired driving situation.
- b) The bartender (host) then would discreetly approach the person with the recommendation that he/she not drive.
- c) The person can also ask the bartender (host) for assistance.
- d) The bartender (host) would call a confidential number of a participating cab company, which dispatches a taxi to the tavern or restaurant.
- e) The person's keys are then placed in an envelope and handed to the cab driver who takes the person to his or her home before returning the car keys.

As a variation to this program, the person also might be given a cab charge slip when he/she reaches home so that he/she can return the next morning to pick up his/her vehicle.

2. Private Vehicle Escort - Annual Fee

This type of program allows a person who finds him/herself in a potential impaired driving situation to call a special number and request a ride home. Two or three volunteers/employees would respond to the call and escort the person and his/her car, home. An annual "club" fee is paid which guarantees access to this service. A minimal response fee could be included at the time of the pick-up.

3. Private Vehicle Escort - Special Events - No Annual Fee

This type of program usually operates during those occasions when increased drinking traditionally occurs (e.g. Christmas, New Year's). A base location is established in a community, where volunteer drivers congregate. The telephone numbers for this location are widely advertised. Persons who find themselves in a potential impaired driving situation would call the base location, two or three volunteers would respond and both the caller and his/her car would be escorted home. The service is free, though "tips" would be accepted.

C. PROGRAM EXPERIENCES

Examples of each category of the above noted safe ride home programs follow. Further information is outlined in a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Report which identified 512 safe ride services in the United States.

1. Subsidized Taxi Rides

In 1983, a program called "Sober Cab" was initiated in St. Louis, Missouri, by the largest taxi service in that area. The program was used over the Christmas and New Year holidays (i.e. 12 days) during which transportation home for 424 customers was provided. During this time, there were no traffic deaths involving alcohol in St. Louis. Officials believed this was a direct result of the cab program, increased public awareness of the alcohol abuse issue, and stricter enforcement of drunk driving laws. The "Sober Cab" program was well publicized, with stories carried by all major television stations and newspapers. The Anheuser-Busch brewery became officially involved in this program in 1985. Their involvement has developed to the point where manuals are distributed by the advertising agency for Anheuser-Busch on an ongoing basis. The manual is fairly detailed and provides contacts for further information.

A relatively successful cab program has operated for the past three and a half years in Red Deer, Alberta, through sponsorship of the local Optimist Club (i.e. DUTI - Driving Under the Influence). This cab program uses a voucher system and involves approximately 35 establishments. Approximately 10,000 rides per year have been provided by this safe ride program.

The Co-op Cab Company in Edmonton, Alberta, approached the Department of the Solicitor General with a request that further consideration be given to some form of Alert Cab. A meeting with the Public Relations Officer, Ms. Arvel Thompson, indicated the taxi company wished to invest in the Alert Cab program. This company set up such a program with a local business in 1987 which ran for approximately three months. The cab company and the lounge involved, contributed \$1.50 each towards a safe ride for an impaired customer. Other drinking establishments were enthusiastic about the program, however, did not wish to become involved due to perceived program costs. The Co-op Cab company has indicated they would be quite willing to work with other cab companies to provide full city wide coverage. If such a program was to be considered on a comprehensive basis, then the taxi commission would have to be willing to obtain approval for reduced taxi rates (i.e. the taxi companies' contribution to the program).

2. Private Vehicle Escort - Annual Fee

The International Good Samaritan Express Program began in 1985 in Lake Tahoe and has now provided over 12,000 safe rides to Lake Tahoe residents and visitors. This utilizes private citizens to provide safe rides home for impaired individuals who might otherwise drive.

The Good Samaritan Express Program runs a highly successful program in Lake Tahoe and also has recently extended to Sacramento where a fairly extensive evaluation is underway. The Lake Tahoe program was highly rated in the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Report as it takes both the customer and that person's vehicle home. Membership dues are relatively small with \$25 per year asked for an individual or \$40 for a family. This service is staffed twenty-four hours a day, seven days per week. The Lake Tahoe program appeared to reduce alcohol related traffic accidents.

The "Call-a-Ride Club", an affiliate of Discretion Drivers (B.C.) Limited, offers a fully licensed and insured chauffeur service for members in the Vancouver area. An annual fee of \$69.95 provides unlimited use for a member, though other alternate plans are available (i.e. family, corporate). Upon receipt of a call (i.e. confidential number), a staff member is dispatched to the call location. The staff member's vehicle is affixed to the rear of the customer's vehicle with a specially engineered towing hitch. The tow hitch installation does not damage the vehicle and the connection process takes eight to ten minutes.

The central dispatch center of this club is available 24 hours a day, seven days per week. Since this club serves the whole lower mainland there is an additional kilometric charge after the first ten kilometres.

3. Private Vehicle Escort - Special Events - No Annual Fee

"Operation Red Nose" commenced in 1984 through Laval University, among other sponsors, and has expanded since. There are currently over 19 such operations throughout the Province of Quebec which respond to over 8,000 calls for transportation during festive seasons. Each operation associates itself with a police agency. Associations involved in setting up such operations must get authorization from the corporation that runs Operation Red Nose.

The service is provided until 3:00 a.m. on the specific nights of operation. It is free to persons who utilize the service, though tips may be accepted.

Mount Royal College in Calgary, Alberta, has adapted Operation Red Nose to supply a similar service during festive occasions ("Project Safely Home"). They are in their second year of operation and intend not only to continue next year but also expand to the University of Calgary and S.A.I.T. It is their further intent to approach the Alberta Colleges and Technical Institutions Executive Committee to expand the program province wide. If approved, the program would be conducted through the Universities. The current base location is at Mount Royal College, where volunteer drivers congregate. They utilize approximately 22 volunteers per night which includes 20 drivers, one supervisor, and one receptionist.

When a call is received two drivers go out. One person escorts the caller home and the other volunteer follows in the pick up car. During the 1988/89 festive season a total of 59 volunteers were used over 13 nights. A total of 232 calls were received and 201 persons took advantage of the free ride home.

D. STAKEHOLDERS

The subsidized taxi program will directly involve licensed establishments and their associations, cab companies and brewers/distillers. Other stakeholders would include People Against Impaired Drivers (PAID) and similar anti-impaired driving groups, the police agency, impaired drivers and the public.

The option of private vehicle escorts by a membership club would directly involve impaired drivers and possibly licensed establishments. Further stakeholders could include service clubs, brewers/distillers, police agencies, the public, PAID and similar anti-impaired driving groups.

The option of private vehicle escorts where no specific fee is attached, during festive occasions, would directly involve impaired drivers, volunteers and possibly licensed establishments. Other stakeholders could include brewers/distillers, college/university associations, PAID and similar anti-impaired driving groups.

Multi media involvement would be required in all of the noted program options. The media is considered a prime stakeholder due to its ability to raise the public awareness of such "Safe Ride Programs".

E. FINANCIAL COST OF INITIATIVE

Cost to the Department of the Solicitor General for involvement in any of the program options would not be significant.

1. Subsidized Taxi Rides

The subsidized taxi program would be largely self sufficient if only reduced cab fares are proposed. Equal costs of approximately \$1.50 per stakeholder (i.e. drinking establishment, corporate sponsor and cab company) would substantially lower fares, especially if people are drinking in their own area of the city. The Anheuser-Busch costs for the St. Louis program amounted to \$2,500 for 1987. This approximated \$10 per ride for a total of 250 rides. The St. Louis program had the taxi company, brewery and wholesaler (City or County) each assume one quarter of the cost.

The Red Deer program has the taxi company reduce its rate by \$1 and the drinking establishment or private host at a party make a variable contribution. The DUTI program then fills out vouchers for that amount and the drinking establishment or host hands out the vouchers for that reduced amount. The cab company would obtain the voucher from the user and bill back to the organization (i.e. establishment or party host). The cost to the DUTI program has been slightly over \$500 per year for printing of vouchers and other administrative costs. Since 35 business establishments, as well as a significant number of party hosts, utilize this service throughout the year, the actual costs of the taxi service are widely distributed.

The Molson Brewery indicated there was interest in being involved in a subsidized taxi program. Negotiations on such a commitment have not yet taken place.

The Labatts Brewery has also apparently indicated support, but only for media or publicity costs for a taxi program. Their apparent concern was in supporting a specific business rather than the concept of the anti impaired driving program.

2. Private Vehicle Escort - Annual Fee

This private vehicle escort option would be self sufficient and should not require any direct funding from the Department of the Solicitor General. Such programs operate either through a private enterprise business or service club. Membership fees handle any administrative or operational costs.

3. Private Vehicle Escort - Special Events - No Annual Fee

This private vehicle escort option obtains funding through a number of corporate sponsors. This process appears to be functioning well without government intervention.

The Molson Brewery, among others, is already involved in corporate sponsorship of the Mount Royal College program in Calgary and would probably continue such involvement through that program's expansion.

Investment in any of these programs by the Department of the Solicitor General on a financial level does not appear necessary.

Grant funding may, however, be appropriate in the development of a communication strategy. As previously mentioned, funding for media exposure has largely been covered through the corporate funders and public service announcements. Expansion of such programs will require additional funding. Coordination of publicity may be another area where the Department of the Solicitor General could assist.

F. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

The advantages of the safe drive programs outlined above include the following:

1. The number of impaired drivers on the road will be reduced by providing safe transportation. This will result in saving lives.
2. Participation by liquor distributors and retail outlets will assist their public image by showing they are prepared to encourage customers to drink in a responsible manner. It will further indicate they have a concern for customer safety. This will reduce the potential liability that retailers may be placing themselves in by allowing drunk patrons to leave their establishments and drive.
3. Participation of cab companies in a subsidized safe ride program will improve the image not only of the taxi company but also the liquor establishment. Positive advertising for both stakeholders would result.
4. Further participation by the local media in such programs will enhance their public image as responsible corporate citizens.
5. The involvement of private citizens in volunteering their time as drivers will increase the public awareness and investment in such programs.
6. The public would become much more aware not only of the problems of impaired driving but also of the solutions that they can use.

Possible disadvantages to such programs may include the following:

1. The programs may be seen as encouraging irresponsible drinking by providing safe transportation.
2. Abuse may occur by regular patrons using either the subsidized taxi ride or free private vehicle escort programs.

The advantages of involvement in such programs outweigh the potential disadvantages. The program examples indicate a relatively significant positive effect. Public awareness and sensitivity to the impaired driving problem has been enhanced by these programs. The participation, in the main, by corporate sponsors and interested

citizens identify safe ride programs as being generally accepted by the community at large. A full catalogue of safe ride programs from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, United States Department of Transportation, is being obtained. It is concluded that the rapid growth and acceptance of such programs merits our department's involvement.

G. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the foregoing review, the following recommendations are being forwarded for consideration:

1. That the Department of the Solicitor General assist in a coordinating role in the development of a subsidized taxi ride program. This would include forming a committee of representative stakeholders and developing a formal strategy for implementation of such a program.
2. That the Department of the Solicitor General encourage the expansion of the private vehicle escort program for special events currently operating from the Mount Royal College Campus. The intent would be to assist with grant funding as a corporate sponsor so the program could expand to form a provincial base.
3. That the Department of the Solicitor General not become financially involved with the private vehicle escort program that requires an annual fee and membership format. This program is best developed by a private enterprise agency. Information collected to date on such programs would be provided to individuals showing an interest in this area.
4. That involvement by the Department of the Solicitor General in any of the programs noted above shall incorporate a communications strategy.